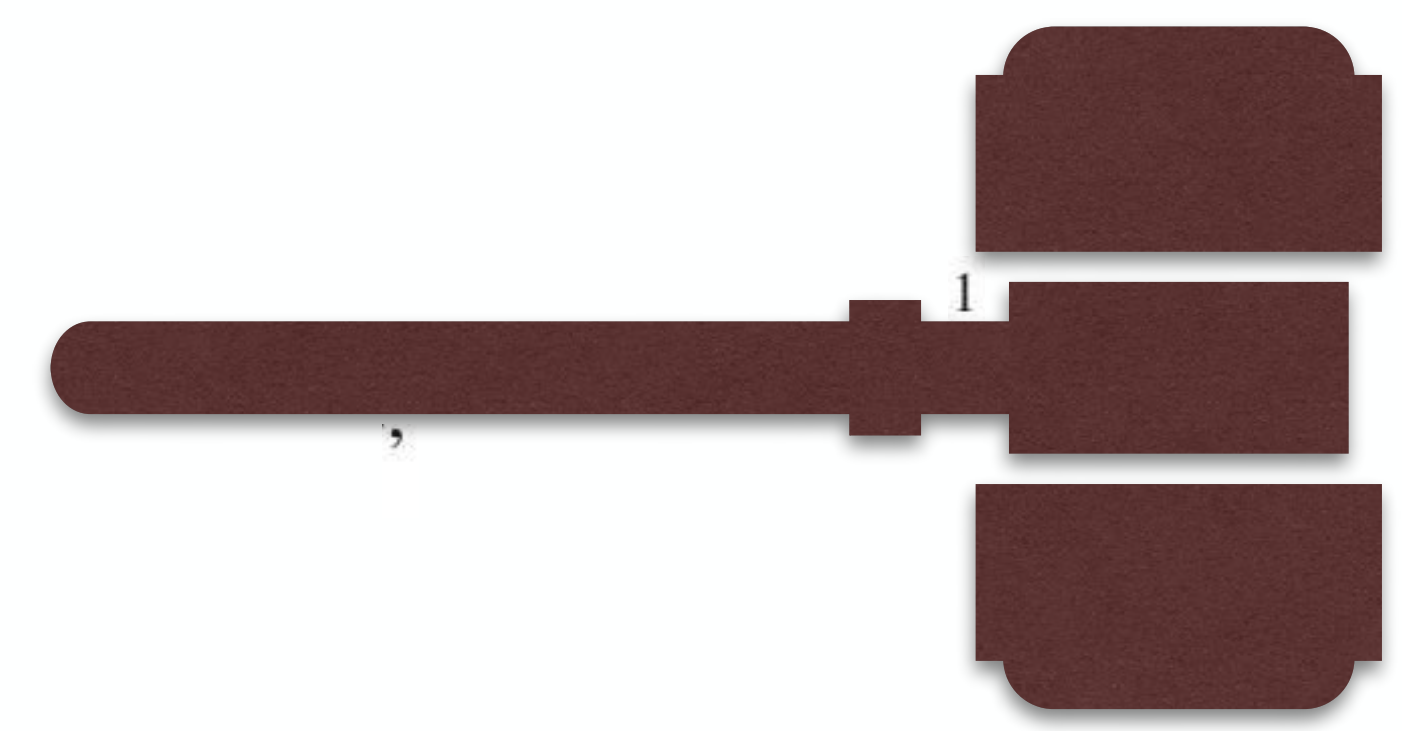


# PSYCH 491Z: Moral Psychology



## Winter 2024 Syllabus DRAFT

### Course Description:

This course reviews theory and research on the psychology of morality. We will investigate evidence that morality is innate – or not – and the processes underlying moral judgements. We will explore how judgements of morality guide people’s decisions and behaviours, and consider moral judgements in the context of cultural norms and institutions. This course draws on research from social, cognitive, and developmental psychology, as well as personality, neuroscience, and evolutionary psych.

### Professor:

Dr. Zoë Francis  
[zoe.francis@ufv.ca](mailto:zoe.francis@ufv.ca)

### Lectures:

Thursday 11:30am - 2:20pm  
Room D121

### Office hours:

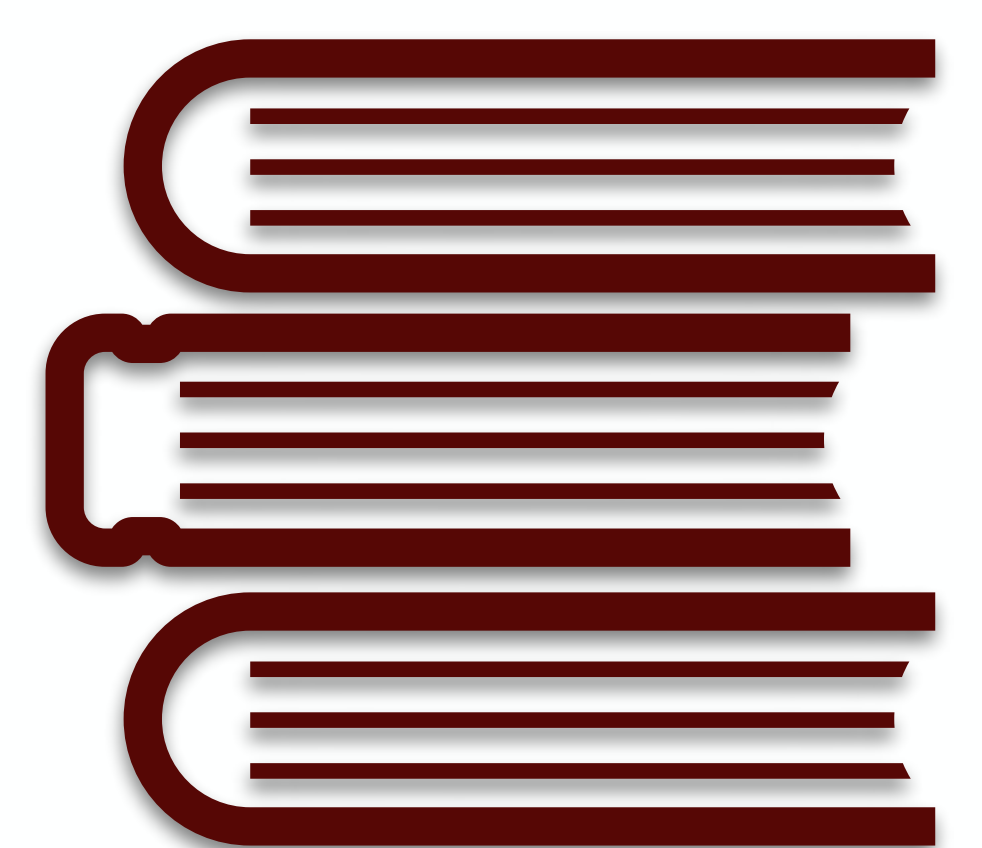
Tuesdays 3-4pm and Thursdays 3-4pm  
Room D 218d (and by appointment).

If you have any questions, please send me an email. I typically respond to emails within 1-2 business days.

### Course Readings:

There is **no textbook** for this class. Instead, we will be reading a selection of articles on topics from moral psychology (journal articles and book chapters).

Please refer to the Reading List in MyClass and at the end of this syllabus.



### Course Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe theories of morality and moral development
- Discuss the processes underlying moral judgements and evaluations
- Critically evaluate research findings in moral psychology
- Critically evaluate common research designs used in moral psychology
- Analyze morality in the context of societal institutions (e.g., religion, law, healthcare)





# Course Schedule

**Note:** This schedule (including readings) is subject to revisions. Changes will be posted on Blackboard.

Week	Topic	Assessments/Activities
<b>1</b> Jan 4	Helping, Altruism, and Empathy	
<b>2</b> Jan 11	Revenge & Punishment	
<b>3</b> Jan 18	Emotions	
<b>4</b> Jan 25	Moralization and Sacred Values	
<b>5</b> Feb 1	Dual Processes of Morality	<i>[Boardgame activity in-class]</i>
<b>6</b> Feb 8	CLASS CANCELLED	<b>Due:</b> Boardgame Assignment
<b>7</b> Feb 15	Role of Intention	
<i>Reading Break: No Class</i>		
<b>8</b> Mar 1	Judgements of Moral Character	<b>Due:</b> Research Proposal <i>[Analyses conducted in-class]</i>
<b>9</b> Mar 8	Moral Signalling	
<b>10</b> Mar 15	Morality in Everyday Life	<b>Due:</b> Research Report
<b>11</b> Mar 22	Morality and Law	
<b>12</b> Mar 29	Morality and Healthcare	
<b>13</b> April 5	Morality and Religion	<b>Due:</b> (Creative) Writing Assignment
<b>Exam Period</b>		<i>Oral Exams: individually scheduled</i>

## Grading Overview:

Assessment	% of Total	Due Date
Journal Article Worksheets	15% (5 x 3%)	In-class (multiple weeks)
Boardgame Analysis	10%	
Research Proposal	10%	
Research Report	25%	
(Creative) Writing Assignment	15%	
Oral Final Exam	25%	Individually scheduled

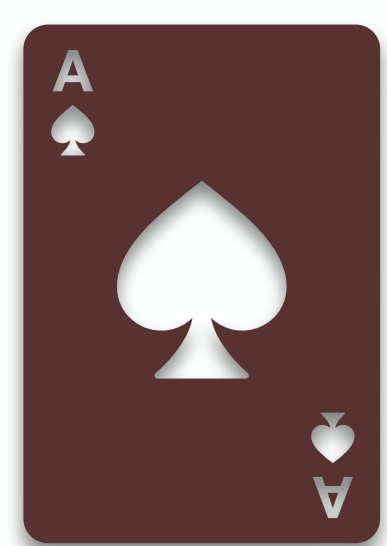
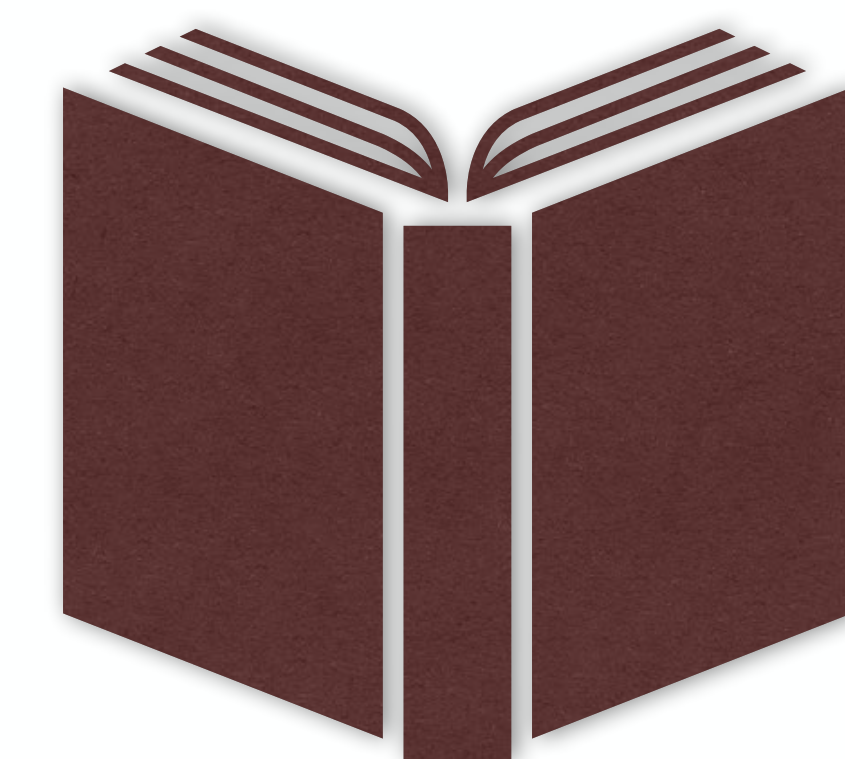


# Assignments & Evaluations

*More information/instructions will be provided in class.*

## **Journal Article Discussion Worksheets** (5 x 3% = 15%)

During class in at least seven weeks, you will discuss the assigned readings in groups. During your discussion, you will complete and submit a short “worksheet” as a group that answers questions about the reading. Five worksheets will count towards your grade.



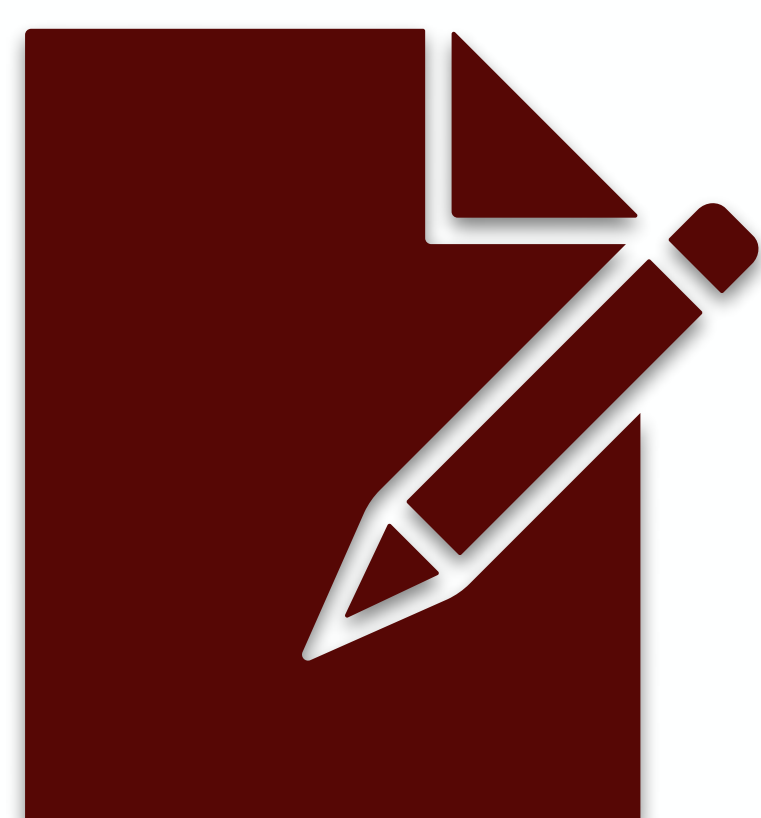
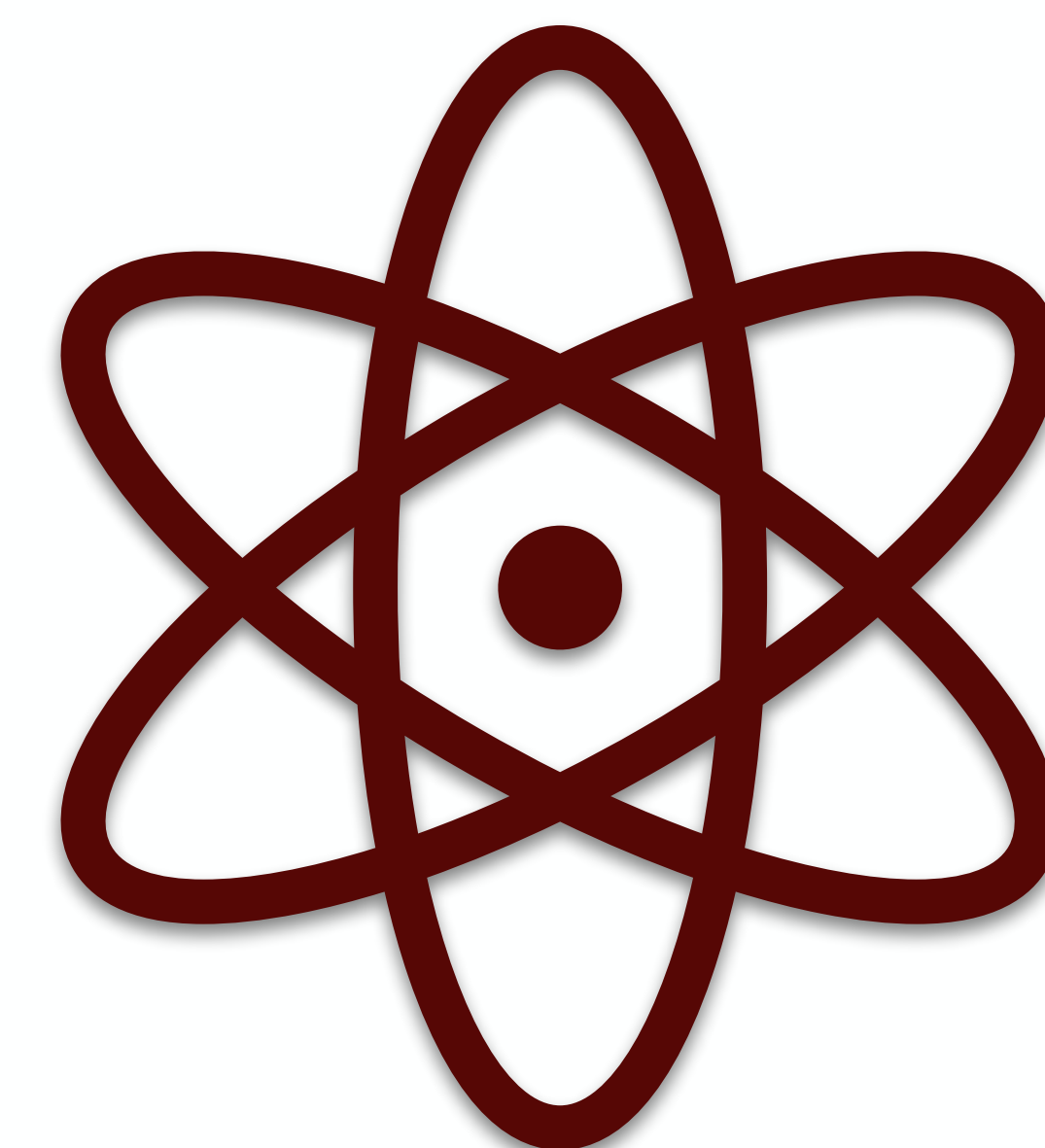
## **Board Game Assignment** (10%)

You will demonstrate your knowledge of course material by analyzing a board/card game (played during class) and showing how moral principles and phenomenon are reflected within the game.

## **Research Proposal and Research Report** (10% + 25%)

For this assignment, you will propose a correlational research question using variables including moral foundations, emotions, personality traits, dual process judgements, reasoning style, cross-cultural variables, gender, SES, and more. The short proposal will outline your research question and explain your hypothesis.

During class, we will then use an existing dataset to actually test your research question using a sample of over 7,000 participants! Using the results of this secondary data analysis, you will write and submit a final research report (consisting of introduction, methods, results, and discussion sections).



## **Morality in Context: (Creative) Writing Assignment** (20%)

In the second half of the semester, we will have a second written assignment where you will demonstrate your knowledge of how moral processes unfold in specific contexts. There are two assignment options: a creative writing story or a more traditional essay/paper.

## **Oral Exam** (25%)

Final exams are conducted via a 25-30 minute individual oral exam. The exam covers the material from the entire course, and focuses on assessing: (i) conceptual knowledge of the major theories of morality, (ii) ability to evaluate strengths/weaknesses of research methods in moral psychology, and (iii) evidence of critical engagement with course readings/content.





# Course Policies

## Attendance and Absences:

Regular attendance is required to maximize your success in this course. However, if you are ill or have symptoms listed in the daily self-assessment health check, please do **not** come to the UFV campus. Instead, please email me with the **Student Declaration of Absence** form **within 48 hours** of missing class; this counts as an excused absence.

## Missing/Late Work:

Unexcused late assignments will have 10% deducted per day, and will only be accepted up to 5 days late. An unexcused no-show for the oral exam will result in 20% deducted, and a grade of zero will be assigned in the event of a second unexcused no-show.

If an assignment is missed or late due to an illness, injury, or other excused absence please **complete the Student Declaration of Absence form**, available in Course Info/Resources, and email me as soon as possible — no later than 48 hours after class ([zoe.francis@ufv.ca](mailto:zoe.francis@ufv.ca)).

Students are expected to make up any missed work within 3 days of returning to classes after illness and within a week of bereavement leave.

## Academic Integrity & Plagiarism Policy:

It is everyone's responsibility to attend to academic integrity. Plagiarizing "by accident" or "not knowing that it is plagiarism" is NOT an excuse. One of the most common forms of plagiarism is using the *exact words* of someone else, without quotation marks, and ending the phrase with the author and year in parentheses. Unfortunately, even though this includes a citation, it is plagiarism.

When summarizing someone else's ideas without direct quotes, you should read the text/source, study it a bit, and then **put it away**. Then, you can write about the ideas and what the article was about holistically, **in your own words**. Substituting individual words (e.g., using synonyms) or re-ordering words in a sentence is not the same as re-writing an idea in your own words.

Re-using assignments from other classes - even assignments that you wrote yourself - is also an academic offence (called self-plagiarism).

As this is an upper-year course, you are expected to already be familiar with the plagiarism and academic integrity policies at UFV. The Plagiarism and Academic Integrity policy is available in the "Resources" section of MyClass.

## Letter Grades:

A+	90-100	B+	77-79	C+	67-69	D	50-59
A	85-89	B	73-76	C	63-66	F	BELOW 50
A-	80-84	B-	70-72	C-	60-62	I	Temporary grade



# University Resources

## English Language Services

Services are open to all UFV students. Students will receive support from an English as an Additional Language (EAL) faculty member with reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills to help with any UFV course they are taking. ELS support sessions are private and confidential. The goal is to help you understand expectations for course activities and assignments and to improve your language, study, and cross-cultural skills to help you succeed through personalized, one-on-one support sessions with ELS Department faculty. Students are able to book online appointments.

For further info or to book an appointment: <https://ufv.ca/esl/online-help-centre/general-els-support/>

## Centre for Accessibility Services

The Centre for Accessibility Services operates as the central contact point for students with disabilities at UFV. The office focuses on providing accommodations and services to help meet academic demands, while promoting student responsibility and self-advocacy. Students who have been diagnosed with a mental, physical, sensory, or neurological impairment, or learning disorder (either temporary or permanent) that restricts their ability to perform classroom activities should reach out to CAS. Any accommodations for disabilities or learning disorders must be arranged through the Centre for Accessibility Services.

For more information or to register for support, contact: <https://www.ufv.ca/accessibility/>

## Academic Success Centre

The Academic Success Centre (ASC) offers FREE student-focused tutoring, workshops, online resources and support programs to develop students' academic skills and knowledge. Peer tutors work with students on personal learning strategies and approaches, and provide writing and subject-area support under the supervision of the Learning Strategist and the Coordinator of the Academic Success Centre.

<https://www.ufv.ca/asc/>

## Priority Access to Student Support (PASS)

The UFV Priority Access to Student Supports (PASS) program connects students to the supports and resources that may help them to increase their chance of success. Such assistance may include putting students in touch with an academic advisor, financial aid, a counsellor or another resource. If your instructor is concerned about your progress, he/she may refer you to PASS. The referral is treated confidentially and is sent because your instructor cares about your progress and success in this course. Your response to PASS is entirely voluntary. If you do not wish your instructor to make a referral to PASS on your behalf, please let them know by email. Visit [ufv.ca/student-services/PASS](https://ufv.ca/student-services/PASS) for more information.



# Reading List

## Week 1: Helping, Altruism, and Empathy

- Bloom, P. (2009). *Descartes' Baby: How the Science of Child Development Explains What Makes Us Human* (Excerpt - "Good and Evil"). Basic Books.
- Warneken, F., & Tomasello, M. (2006). Altruistic helping in human infants and young chimpanzees. *Science*, 311, 1301-1303.

## Week 2: Revenge and Punishment

- Fehr, E., & Gächter, S. (2002). Altruistic punishment in humans. *Nature*, 415, 137-140.
- Cushman, F., Gray, K., Gaffey, A., & Mendes, W. B. (2012). Simulating murder: The aversion to harmful action. *Emotion*, 12, 2-7.
- Eriksson, K., Strimling, P., Gelfand, M., Wu, J., Abernathy, J., Akotia, C. S., ... & Van Lange, P. A. (2021). Perceptions of the appropriate response to norm violation in 57 societies. *Nature communications*, 12(1), 1481.

## Week 3: Role of Emotions

- Haidt, J., Koller, S. H., & Dias, M. G. (1993). Affect, culture, and morality, or is it wrong to eat your dog? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 65, 613-628.
- Teper, R., Inzlicht, M., & Page-Gould, E. (2011). Are we more moral than we think? Exploring the role of affect in moral behavior and moral forecasting. *Psychological Science*, 22, 553-558
- Chapman, H.A., Kim, D.A. Susskind, J.M. & Anderson, A.K. (2009). In bad taste: Evidence for the oral origins of moral disgust. *Science*, 323, 1222-1226.

## Week 4: Moralization and Sacred Values

- Feinberg, M., Kovacheff, C., Teper, R., & Inbar, Y. (2019). Understanding the process of moralization: How eating meat becomes a moral issue. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 117(1), 50.
- Tetlock, P. E. (2003). Thinking the unthinkable: Sacred values and taboo cognitions. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 7, 320-324.

## Week 5: Dual Processes of Morality

- Greene, J.D., Sommerville, R.B., Nystrom, L.E., Darley, J.M., & Cohen, J.D. (2001). An fMRI investigation of emotional engagement in moral judgment. *Science*, 293, 2105-2108.
- Greene, J.D., Morelli, S.A., Lowenberg, K., Nystrom, L.E., Cohen, J.D. (2008) Cognitive load selectively interferes with utilitarian moral judgment. *Cognition*, 107, 1144-1154.
- Kahane, G. (2015). Sidetracked by trolleys: Why sacrificial moral dilemmas tell us little (or nothing) about utilitarian judgment. *Social neuroscience*, 10(5), 551-560

## Week 7: Role of Intention

- Greene, J. D., Cushman, F. A., Stewart, L. E., Lowenberg, K., Nystrom, L. E., & Cohen, J. D. (2009). Pushing moral buttons: The interaction between personal force and intention in moral judgment. *Cognition*, 111, 364-371.
- Kneer, M., & Machery, E. (2019). No luck for moral luck. *Cognition*, 182, 331–348.
- Sun, J., & Goodwin, G. P. (2020). Do people want to be more moral? *Psychological Science*, 31(3), 243-257.



# Reading List (Continued)

## Week 8: Judgements of Moral Character

- Uhlmann, E. L., Pizarro, D. A., & Diermeier, D. (2015). A person-centered approach to moral judgment. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 10*, 72-81.
- Uhlmann, E. L., Zhu, L., & Tannenbaum, D. (2013). When it takes a bad person to do the right thing. *Cognition, 126*, 326-334
- Dana, J., Cain, D. M., & Dawes, R. M. (2006). What you don't know won't hurt me: Costly (but quiet) exit in dictator games. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 100*, 192-201

## Week 9: Moral Signalling

- Valdesolo, P. & DeSteno, D. (2007). Moral hypocrisy: Social groups and the flexibility of virtue. *Psychological Science, 18*, 689-690.
- Sachdeva, S., Iliev, R., & Medin, D. L. (2009). Sinning saints and saintly sinners: The paradox of moral self-regulation. *Psychological Science, 20*, 523-528.
- Jordan, J.J., Sommers, R., Bloom, P., & Rand, D.G. (2017). Why do we hate hypocrites? Evidence for a theory of false signaling. *Psychological Science, 28*, 356-368

## Week 10: Morality in Everyday Life

- Hofmann, W., Wisneski, D. C., Brandt, M. J., & Skitka, L. J. (2014). Morality in everyday life. *Science, 345*(6202), 1340-1343.
- Molho, C., Tybur, J. M., Van Lange, P. A., & Balliet, D. (2020). Direct and indirect punishment of norm violations in daily life. *Nature communications, 11*(1), 3432.
- Schwartz, S. A., & Inbar, Y. (2023). Is it good to feel bad about littering? Conflict between moral beliefs and behaviors for everyday transgressions. *Cognition, 236*, 105437.

## Week 11: Morality and the Law

- Salerno, J. M., & Bottoms, B. L. (2009). Emotional evidence and jurors' judgments: The promise of neuroscience for informing psychology and law. *Behavioral Sciences & the Law, 27*(2), 273-296.
- Barrett, H. C., & Saxe, R. R. (2021). Are some cultures more mind-minded in their moral judgements than others? *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences, 376*(1838), 20200288. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2020.0288>

## Week 12: Morality and Healthcare

- DeMichelis, C. (2018). The Best Interests Standard as a Logic of Empire: Unpacking the Political Dimensions of Parental Refusal. *The American Journal of Bioethics, 18*(8), 83-85.
- Kuhse, H., & Singer, P. (2009). *What Is Bioethics? A Historical Introduction*. In H. Kuhse & P. Singer (Eds.), *A Companion to Bioethics* (pp. 1-11). Wiley-Blackwell.

## Week 13: Morality and Religion

- McKay, R., & Whitehouse, H. (2015). Religion and morality. *Psychological Bulletin, 141*(2), 447.
- Whitehouse, H., François, P., Savage, P. E., Hoyer, D., Feeney, K. C., Cioni, E., ... & Turchin, P. (2022). Testing the Big Gods hypothesis with global historical data: a review and "retake". *Religion, Brain & Behavior, 1-43*.